

III. GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION

A. Regional Cooperation

ADB's charter commits it to fostering regional cooperation. In 1992, with its assistance, Cambodia, People's Republic of China (PRC), Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam entered into a program of subregional economic cooperation, designed to enhance economic relations among the countries.

The RGC sees regional and international integration as one of the key pillars of its development agenda. Regional cooperation will provide Cambodia with economies of scale and opportunity to attract foreign investment, create employment, and reduce poverty. Key to Cambodia's commitment to enhance regional links has been its active role in the GMS.

The GMS Program, with support from ADB and other development partners, has helped the implementation of high-priority subregional projects in transport, energy, telecommunications, environment, human resource development, reducing human trafficking, health, tourism, trade, private sector investment, and agriculture.

Complementing ADB's country program assistance, Cambodia has been provided with three GMS loan projects and one grant project amounting to \$200.90 million as of December 2006. Those projects cover a wide range of economic infrastructure and social protection, and have helped connect Cambodia with other GMS nations through highway projects.

The GMS Program also brings together government and other stakeholders of the region at various levels ranging from sector working groups at the official level, to ministerial meetings, with a GMS summit of leaders of countries every 2 years.

The Second GMS Summit was held on 4–5 July 2005 in Kunming, PRC. The Prime Ministers of Cambodia, PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam noted the significant progress achieved over the last 13 years under the GMS Economic Cooperation Program, which ADB has assisted since its inception in 1992.

At the end of the Summit, the leaders issued the Kunming Declaration that renews their commitment to achieve an integrated, harmonious, and prosperous subregion through forging stronger partnership.

B. The Phnom Penh Plan: Learning Resource Center

Developing Mekong Leaders

At the first-ever GMS Summit of Leaders, held in Phnom Penh in November 2002, Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia proposed the idea of establishing the Phnom Penh Plan (PPP) for Development Management the heads of state of the six GMS countries. It is an important human resource development initiative in the GMS.

The PPP aims to (i) strengthen the managerial and leadership capacities of GMS middle and senior officials in designing and implementing development programs, projects, and plans; (ii) reinforce partnerships and strengthen cooperation among the GMS countries; (iii) develop institutional capacities through joint arrangements with established capacity-building partners; and (iv) promote GMS-anchored research to assist capacity-building interventions and policy development.

In less than 4 years, the PPP has delivered couple dozens of demand-based learning programs, benefiting more than 550 GMS officials; of these, over half are at levels equivalent to director and above. One third of the participants are women.

At the second GMS summit held at Kunming City, Yunnan Province, PRC, in July 2005, heads of state lauded the effective role of PPP in building capacity in the subregion. They believed that PPP is a well-designed program and urged the expansion of the PPP to maximize coverage and to expose GMS officials to cutting-edge development technologies.

ADB funds the PPP through its Technical Assistance Special Fund. ADB approved funding for the PPP since October 2002 and is committed to fund the program until 2007.

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) has been established in the premises of CARM. The LRC provides public access to information through an ADB database on general development issues, particularly on the GMS. CARM's library has been merged with the LRC to provide public access to print information and publication.

Learning Resource Center

The LRC is a “one-stop shop” for knowledge on the GMS, located in the premises of CARM (Building C). The LRC provides public access—in particular middle and senior managers, research institutes, and academic institutions—to information through an ADB database on general development issues, particularly on the GMS. CARM's library has been merged with the LRC to provide public access to print information and publication. The LRC also houses an internet facility consisting of computers to enable access through a network across the GMS countries, PPP partners, and development institutions.

The LRC serves as the gateway to information on ADB, the GMS countries, the Asian region, and Cambodia. It also provides computer workstations to enable access to development-related information; other accessible ADB and GMS development databases; a collection of PPP learning programs and materials on public policy and development management; a collection of books, journals, articles, periodicals; and ADB knowledge products and services.

The LRC has networked with the Public Information Center at Manila, United Nations (UN) organizations, international NGOs, and other institutions in Cambodia for publication sharing and acquisition.

It is open to the public from Monday to Friday, 8:30 am–12:00 pm, and from 1:30 pm–5:00 pm. It can be reached via tel: +23 215 805 (ext. 229) or pplrc@adb.org, or visit website at www.adb.org/GMS/phnom-penh-plan.

Increased access and equity to basic education will greatly contribute to reducing poverty in Cambodia

